



# SECURITY COUNCIL

Maria Sofía Duque and Stefanía Jaramillo

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COMMITTEE GUIDE

SC

CCBMUN **XXIII**

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## 1. Presidents' Letter

Dear delegates,

We welcome you to this year's CCBMUNXXII, and to our committee, the United Nations Security Council (SC). We are María Sofía Duque and Stefanía Jaramillo, 12th and 11th grade students at Colegio Colombo Británico, respectively. Having participated in various models over the years, we are very passionate about them and we acknowledge the significant influence they have on students. Throughout our experience, we have acquired skills both as delegates and presidents, which will hopefully contribute to creating a memorable experience during your participation in this special committee.

The Security Council, being the main organism of the UN, is an exciting committee that differs from the others, having a few special procedures you will later learn in the guide. Each delegation will have an enormous influence on the debate, so we strongly suggest that you get to know and understand your state's political perspective. We are aware this is considered to be a challenging committee, but we will guide you through every step of the way so you can make the most out of this unique experience.

We hope that your participation in this committee will be not only gratifying, but also one that is enriching, where you use your knowledge and skills to solve conflicts that are very relevant in today's world and to the UN's agenda. We hope this experience will allow you to open your mind to new possibilities about how our world works, and has worked, throughout history and in the present.

What we advise the most is for you all to brush up on your political and philosophical knowledge, use your critical thinking and analytical skills, and most of all, challenge yourselves to reach your full potential. We believe that you are capable of achieving whatever you set your mind to, so use this model as an opportunity to not only grow as a student, but as a person.

We are both honoured and delighted to be your presidents this year, and cannot wait to see you all! If you have any questions or doubts, please feel free to send us an email.

Kind regards,

Stefania Jaramillo and Maria Sofía Duque  
Security Council Chair

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## 2. Committee Information

### I. History/Context

“In 1945, after the huge repercussions of World War II, society was left in diplomatic disorder. Therefore, the United Nations was established as an international organisation to maintain worldwide peace and to prevent conflicts of a severe magnitude. The United Nations Security Council is the main organism of the UN. Its primary goal is to maintain international peace and security by diplomatically addressing issues of great concern. This committee was established under the 5th chapter of the United Nations Charter on June 26th, 1945.” (Jaramillo, Robles, 2020).

“Throughout its history, the United Nations Security Council has been involved in belligerent conflicts, emphasising its significance in resolving threats to international security.

In The Syrian war, the Security Council's contribution to global peacekeeping was successful. Complex geopolitical and humanitarian issues were presented by the conflict, which started in 2011. The Security Council's response to the crisis included resolutions on ceasefires, humanitarian access and dialogue, demonstrating its dedication to peacefully resolving disputes and reducing the suffering of people.

The committee has made tremendous progress towards achieving its goals by expanding its peacekeeping operations. Peacekeeping operations in places like Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Cyprus have shown the Security Council's dedication to sending out international forces to stabilise troubled areas and to aid in the establishment of long-lasting peace.” (Gallego, Ordoñez, 2023).

### II. Structure

The United Nations Security Council operates under Chapter V (articles 23 to 32) of the “Charter of the United Nations”, which includes the composition, functions,

powers, and procedures of the entity. The following is the structure imposed by said articles:

### **Article 23:**

1. The Security Council shall consist of fifteen members of the United Nations. The Republic of China, France, the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America will be permanent members of the Security Council. The General Assembly will elect another ten Members of the United Nations who will be non-permanent members of the Security Council, paying particular attention, first of all, to the contribution of the Members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the organisation, as well as equitable geographical distribution.
2. Non-permanent members of the Security Council will be elected for two years. In the first election of non-permanent members held after the number of members of the Security Council has been increased from eleven to fifteen, two of the four new members will be elected for one year. Outgoing members will not be re-eligible for the subsequent period.

Each member of the Security Council will have a representative.

### **Article 24:**

In order to ensure rapid and effective action by the United Nations, its Members give the Security Council the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security and recognise that the Security Council acts on their behalf in their performance of the functions imposed by that responsibility.

1. In carrying out these functions, the Security Council shall proceed following the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations. The powers granted to the Security Council for the performance of these functions are defined in Chapters VI, VII, VIII, and XII.
2. The Security Council shall submit annual reports and, when necessary, special reports to the General Assembly.

## Article 25

The Members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the present Charter. (Charter of the United Nations, 1945).

With the above articles in mind, the current members of the United Nations Security Council are as follows:

- Permanent: China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- Non-permanent: Estonia, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Niger, Norway, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, Vietnam.

The election is held by secret ballot, and there are no nominations. Non-permanent members must be elected by a 2/3 majority of all member states.

### III. Model Structure

“In a UN model, this is the only committee in which its delegates have the power to take a variety of actions against other delegations. During the debate it is therefore common to see how different delegations, in pursuit of their countries’ interests, are able to move their nations’ troops into the conflict zone. However, it must be remembered that such actions can incur an aggressive response from the opposing side, and so a plan of action must be maintained in case this happens. In order to take such actions, the delegation(s) should draw up an official document such as a press release (Directive) expressing, from their state’s perspective, the intention to move troops. This document should include the reason, the location where they will be stationed and the number of troops and other armaments to be moved.

Finally, as previously mentioned, the Security Council is the only committee which has the figures known as the veto powers. Thus, even during the model, the five delegations possessing this power will have to vote in favour or abstain from voting on a resolution or else it will be immediately discarded. This is why the

delegations present are encouraged to constantly convince those delegates to be in favour of their resolution in order to avoid the scenario presented above.” (Gallego, Ordoñez, 2023).

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# Topic 1: Humanitarian Exemptions from UN Sanctions Regimes

## I. History/Context

The Security Council, as one of the main organs of the UN, is in charge of maintaining international peace and security. Under Article 41 of the UN Charter, which was signed in June 1945 and established the purpose and structure of the United Nations, the SC was given permission to impose sanctions with the intention of coercing states to change their behaviour if their actions have an effect on these two core principles. As it is outlined in the UN Charter: *“The Security Council may decide what measures not involving the use of armed force are to be employed to give effect to its decisions, and it may call upon the Members of the United Nations to apply such measures. These may include complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations.”* (UN Charter, 1945, Article 41)

The most common sanctions are embargoes, asset freezes and travel bans. An embargo is the prohibition of the import or export of certain goods to a country, meaning the prohibition of trade. Asset freezes mean the suspension of the flow of monetary or financial resources to any entity, and travel bans prohibit certain individuals from accessing or leaving a nation. These measures are implemented with the intention of exerting pressure on states who are violating international law by disregarding agreements, treaties or norms established by international legal frameworks. These frameworks govern the behaviour of states with the intention of maintaining global order. Initiating armed conflicts without justification, committing human rights violations, interfering with the sovereignty or other states and engaging in illegal trade activities are all considered violations of international law. Clear examples of violations of international law are Russia’s annexation of Crimea (2014), the Rwandan genocide (1994) and North Korea’s continuous human rights abuses (forced labour, political imprisonment, unjustified executions, etc).



However, there have been unintended humanitarian consequences of sanctions, in which citizens face the harm instead of the governments. They may affect civilians' access to food, water, medicines or any necessary resources or services that are needed for survival, which directly lead to social harm in the impacted society. Social harm refers to actions that may cause suffering or damage to individuals or groups of individuals, manifested in hardship, health crisis, malnutrition or any other situations that may affect the well-being of a community. These consequences are principally concerning when they are implemented in territories involved in conflicts, as these areas may be facing shortages of essential resources even before the Security Council decides to impose measures. For instance, a pertinent example of a nation that faced a humanitarian crisis exacerbated by the sanctions imposed by the SC was Iraq during the 1990s until the beginning of the 2000s.

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait began on August 2, 1990, and it marked the beginning of the Gulf War. The Security Council voted to impose sanctions on Iraq, as it considered its invasion and subsequent annexation of Kuwait to be a violation of international law. These sanctions were applied with the intention that Iraq would withdraw its troops from Kuwait, causing Saddam Hussein to give up his power. The first sanctions imposed were announced in the [Resolution 661](#) of the Security Council, made on August 6th, 1990, and this resolution prohibited all imports and exports with Iraq (with the exceptions of certain medicines). However, the government did not withdraw from Kuwaiti territory, and it decided to implement a rationing system, which is a method of distributing scarce resources (in this case foods such as flour, rice or cooking oil) in controlled amounts to manage scarcity to the Iraqi citizens, as well as introducing measures to try to increase agricultural production in order to manage the economic crisis. Nevertheless, after the bombing campaigns in 1991 (or Operation Desert Storm), led by the United States, a big part of Iraq's infrastructure was destroyed. This exacerbated the food insecurity crisis during the following 12 years; the sanctions caused malnutrition in a vast percentage of the population, especially children as, according to a FAO (UN Food and Agriculture Organisation) report, 31% of Iraqi



children under the age of five suffered from malnutrition in 1997 (Gordon, 2020, para. 4).

Later, Security Council members decided upon certain goods that could be imported to Iraq, but many goods which are necessary for the population were banned, as they could be dual used goods with both civilian and military uses. One of the goods in the list was atropine, which was a drug that was needed for any surgery in which general anaesthesia was used. Iraq was banned from



Figure 1: Protests against UN Sanctions towards Iraq in Washington D.C (AlJazeera, 2008)



Figure 2: Sanctions against Iraq caused enormous suffering (GICJ, 2017)

importing this drug, with the excuse that the nation's soldiers could self-inject it in order to make themselves immune to nerve gas, which it was alleged was being used by Iraq. Ciprofloxacin is another antibiotic used to treat severe cases of bacterial infections, and it was also put on the list with the excuse that it could potentially be used in biological warfare, as its irresponsible use could contribute to the development of antibiotic resistant bacteria, which could have posed a threat to global public health. Other medical sterilisers and refrigerators were banned as well because of similar reasons. Almost all of the computer equipment was blocked, even if these were needed for the education and health systems. The UN estimated that up to 1.7 million Iraqis may have died as a result of the sanctions (AlJazeera, 2008, para. 6), mainly as a result of simple medical conditions, such as infections or dehydration, which can be treated with several medicines that can be bought without prescription, but were unavailable at that time.

The country quickly faced bankruptcy, as it did not gain the resources coming from sales from the agricultural and oil sector. This came to a point where the state could not pay several salaries, so qualified professionals, like teachers and power plant workers, were replaced with individuals with far less experience, while the people who were qualified left the country. The imposed sanctions quickly led to restrictions in monetary resources and research equipment, which encouraged skilled professionals such as doctors, scientists or educators to emigrate to other nations in which they could properly carry out their careers. The sanctions exacerbated the “brain drain” phenomenon in Iraq, which refers to the issue of the emigration of educated and skilled professionals from one country to another, generally in search for better opportunities. This resulted in reduced economic growth and development, and eventually to a collapse of Iraqi society, as children lacked a good education and the hopes for good employment were minimal.

Even though the consequences of these sanctions were never meant to harm the population directly, and the Security Council made several efforts to try to improve Iraq’s situation, the effect of these sanctions endured. This raised several humanitarian concerns, because even though the sanctions were aimed at eliminating potential threats to security and peace, some were deeply impacting the civilian population in negative ways.

### **Finding a balance for sanctions**

Events like these have made member states realise that a balance needs to be achieved between enforcing the sanctions while preventing human suffering. This has led to the development of targeted measures, sometimes referred to as “smart” sanctions or humanitarian exceptions.

Humanitarian exemptions under UN sanctions regimes are those provisions that exclude certain activities, goods, or actors from the reach of the particular sanctions measure. They aim at easing the harm of the UN sanctions, more specifically, on vulnerable populations and humanitarian organisations, so those

who fall under the exemption can still carry out their action without violating the sanction. They are obligatory and legally-binding exceptions, made with the purpose of allowing certain organisations to carry out particular humanitarian activities without violating the sanctions regime.

## **Types of exemptions**

There are two types of humanitarian exceptions:

Exemptions for Sanctioned Actors: Those that enable states to be able to take off, temporarily, the restrictions on listed individuals and entities after approval from the appropriate Sanctions Committee (a Sanctions Committee is a secondary group established by the SC to supervise the impact and compliance of sanctions applied).

Exemptions for Impartial Humanitarian Actors: Impartial actors, such as Médecins Sans Frontières, are organisations that work to alleviate suffering in conflict areas, and do not support either party in the conflict. These exemptions aim at creating space in the regimes of sanctions for impartial humanitarian actors and activities, as defined by International Humanitarian Law (IHL). They can specify that certain sanction measures do not apply to impartial humanitarian actors or activities. Further, humanitarian actors can request the Sanctions Committee to officially exempt their activities so that they can work in sanctioned contexts.

## **Procedural aspects**

Not all humanitarian exemptions follow the same procedure, the most common types of procedures an exception can follow are:

Standing humanitarian exemptions: Pre-approved rules that allow certain humanitarian activities to be carried out automatically under sanctioned territories. They are meant to ensure the continuous access to essential goods

during times of crisis. Organisations can carry out these activities continuously without having to ask for permission each time they do.

Case-by-case exemptions (or exemptions upon request) Different from standing exceptions, case-by-case exemptions require organisations or parties to ask for permission every time they carry out humanitarian actions. Its correspondent Sanctions Committee is in charge of revising and approving (or not) these actions.

Exemptions for notification: These kinds of exemptions just require organizations to inform UN officials if they plan to carry out humanitarian actions. If there are not any objections made by the Sanctions Committee, then the plans can be performed.

## II. Current Situation

The current situation in relation to humanitarian exemptions from the UN sanctions regimes has encountered some changes, which are important to highlight. These changes occurred after the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2664 (UNSCR). in December 2022. ***"The Security Council then adopted the text as resolution 2664 (2022) by a vote of 14 in favour to none against, with 1 abstention (India)."*** This resolution aims to ***"safeguard humanitarian action to assist people in contexts where the Council has also imposed sanctions and demonstrates that organ's ability to respond to those in greatest need"*** (UN Press).



Figure 2: An ICRC distribution of food and essential items in Sa'ada governorate, Yemen. © ICRC, 2017.

In order to meet the demands of UN sanctions regimes, this resolution establishes a uniform humanitarian exemption for carrying out projects or activities that are necessary for delivering humanitarian aid and fundamental human support. By lowering legal obstacles and facilitating their operations, the exemption seeks to strengthen humanitarian groups while guaranteeing uniformity and clarity in the distribution of aid. In 2023, the European Union (EU) and the United Kingdom rolled out these extensions into their respective sanctions regimes. The EU implemented the UNSCR 2664 exemption in its mixed UN and EU-UN sanctions regimes, with the aim of ensuring a legal environment where humanitarian activities are uniform.

The EU increased these exemptions in its sanctions regimes, therefore this development had an immense effect. The EU can maintain a consistent approach throughout member states thanks to these partially autonomous regimes, avoiding the complication of disparate legal systems within the EU.

The United Kingdom also joined this exemption implementation in its ISIL (Daesh) and Al-Qaeda (United Nations Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations, among others. What is established has a period of two years, and it is intended that this time be for specific sanctions, with the possibility of renewal. This is an approach that aims to standardise aid, with the specific mission of providing resources to humanitarian providers and financial institutions. This has the objective of delivering aid assertively, without having any type of risk of violating sanctions. These advances brought certain challenges since some sanctions regimes do not yet have comprehensive humanitarian exemptions, and this is where the need to have a clear interpretation from all Member States begins. It is important to ensure that exemptions cover the complex ecosystem of humanitarian organisations and are exercised consistently if they are to be effective.

*Additionally, “On 14 February 2023, the Council decided to introduce the humanitarian exemption pursuant to resolution 2664 in the UN sanctions regimes at EU level, and on 31 March 2023, the Council introduced the humanitarian exemption in the so-called UN/EU mixed sanctions regimes in which EU measures complement sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council. On 27 November 2023,*

*the Council further introduced the humanitarian exemption into certain Union restrictive measures regimes.” (Humanitarian Action: EU Introduces Further Exception to Sanctions, 2024)*

The United States has not been far behind in implementing similar exemptions. The U.S Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has taken steps to enable the continued provision of humanitarian assistance under the new resolution. *“The U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has taken steps to enable the continued provision of humanitarian assistance under the new resolution” (U.S. Department of the Treasury). (Treasury Implements Historic Humanitarian Sanctions Exceptions, 2024).* These actions are being taken by the United States as a significant change to be part of a broader effort to balance sanctions with the need to support humanitarian operations worldwide.

These changes, in their entirety, represent progress towards safeguarding humanitarian operations in places where there are ongoing conflicts, and ensuring that sanctions do not prevent the delivery of essential aid. (We Must Go Above, Beyond Compliance, and Fully Protect Civilians Against ‘Harms They Are Suffering on Our Watch’, Senior Humanitarian Official Tells Security Council | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, 2024)

Building on the momentum created by the passing of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2664, a number of countries outside the European Union and the United Kingdom have already been actively revising sanction policies to carve humanitarian space. Country-specific consultations with Canada, United States and Australia are underway to revise their sanction regimes, and better accommodate humanitarian exemptions that would hopefully ease rather than complicate humanitarian operations. The trend at the global level is showing clear recognition of the crucial need for humanitarian activities to go on unhampered by geopolitical constraints (United Nations, 2022).

In spite of all these developments, the practical application of such exemptions face significant challenges. Usually, humanitarian bodies are still forced to navigate

through bureaucratic situations that can hold up their life-saving efforts. Easy procedures to follow, and more clearly defined guidelines on how to approach compliance, can differentiate one from another. International humanitarian groups are now pushing for a less cumbersome regulatory process. Reforms, they say, need to be done with an eye both to compliance and to operational efficiency.

In Syria, as anywhere else, humanitarian exemptions exist in theory. But in practice, logistic and regulatory hurdles overwhelm organisations. These sanctions target the regime as well as its allies, but make it more complicated to deliver essential supplies such as food and medicine to civilians. As a UN report finds, *“Delivering aid in Syria under exemptions is hampered by an overly complex application process that requires navigating through multiple sanction bodies, each with its own compliance requirements”* (United Nations, 2023). Procedures like these have apparently heightened the severity of the problems. Although the Council decided to prolong the humanitarian exception that was first implemented in February 2023 in response to the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Syria, which was made worse by the earthquake that struck both Syria and Turkey, the situation on the ground is still difficult. Complicated regulatory procedures are causing humanitarian agencies to be overloaded with administrative work and delaying relief efforts. *(Syria: Council Renews Restrictive Measures and Extends Humanitarian Exemption for Another Year, 2024)*

Somalia has also been subject to several sanctions, such as an asset freeze and a travel ban, among others, on al-Shabab. This caused a famine in 2010 and 2011, induced by drought, war, limited aid, and strict al-Shabab rule, which took 258,000 lives and drove many to Ethiopia and Kenya. For this reason, in 2010, the UN Security Council initiated a temporary humanitarian exception to the asset freeze and then made it permanent in 2020.

Also, in Afghanistan, humanitarian needs began to rise with the takeover of power by the Taliban in August 2021. Since 1999, when UNSC Resolution 1988 was adopted, Afghanistan has been subject to a sanctions regime. These sanctions currently apply to Taliban members who hold important positions in the Afghan government. The sanctions badly hit the Afghan economy and curtailed financial



transactions with state institutions. By October 2021, over 22 million Afghans would require direct food and agriculture assistance. As a consequence, the UNSC in December 2021 adopted the humanitarian exception to licence arrangements.

These two cases, from Afghanistan and Somalia, respectively, exemplify the implications of UNSC Resolution 2664 worldwide. That is, in these areas, there were sanctions in place that, instead of helping, exacerbated humanitarian crises by causing delays in making exceptions for early delivery of assistance. (Crystal, 2023)

There are currently 13 UN-sponsored sanctions regimes in effect:

1. Democratic Republic of the Congo (UNSC Resolution no. 1493 and other resolutions)
2. Côte d'Ivoire (UNSC Resolution no. 1572 and other resolutions)
3. Sudan (UNSC Resolutions no. 1591 and other resolutions)
4. Lebanon (UNSC Resolution no. 1636)
5. North Korea (UNSC Resolution no. 1718 and other resolutions)
6. Iran (UNSC Resolution no. 1737 and other resolutions)
7. Eritrea and Somalia (UNSC Resolution no. 1916 and other resolutions)
8. Libya (UNSC Resolution 1970 and other resolutions)
9. Central African Republic (UNSC Resolution no. 2127 and other resolutions)
10. Yemen (UNSC Resolutions no. 2140 and other resolutions)
11. South Sudan (UNSC Resolution no. 2206)
12. Al-Qaeda (UNSC 2 HRC, 2018. Negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights A/HRC/39/54/ Human Rights Council, 11 September 2018 The Question of Humanitarian Exceptions from UN Sanctions Regimes 3 Resolutions no. 1267/1989 and other resolutions)
13. The Taliban (UNSC Resolution no. 1988 and other resolutions)

The great strength of the UNSC is that these resolutions establish binding international law, which is supervised and enforced by the SC members themselves. That makes Security Council resolutions the strongest form of intervention the UN system has. But they also raise great concerns about the precedents they create.

The point of this debate is to evaluate how a balance can be created between the sanctions and humanitarian aid, and decide what these should be in a general

scale, to ensure that the sanctions impact the governments or any other important actors who have the power to change their behaviour in compliance with International Law and not vulnerable populations who might suffer as unintended victims of these measures.

### **III. Key points of the debate**

- Challenges faced in the implementation of humanitarian exemptions
- Risks associated with implementing humanitarian exceptions in specific cases
- The effectiveness of humanitarian exemptions to prevent unintended suffering without compromising the punitive nature of sanctions
- Need for a uniform global policy versus exemptions based on specific situations
- The current structure of humanitarian exceptions
- Modifications of humanitarian exceptions as ways of facilitating humanitarian operations

### **IV. Guiding questions**

1. Does your country have/had any sanctions imposed by the Security Council?
2. What initiatives or policies has your country implemented to ensure compliance with UN sanctions while also addressing humanitarian concerns?



3. What are the potential risks associated with implementing humanitarian exemptions within UN sanctions regimes?
4. How does your country view the effectiveness of current UN sanctions regimes in meeting their intended objectives?
5. What specific measures does your country propose to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian exemptions in addressing the needs of vulnerable populations and humanitarian organisations?
6. How can humanitarian exemptions be structured to facilitate humanitarian operations while maintaining the primary goal of sanctions?
7. How do humanitarian exemptions impact the effectiveness of sanctions as a diplomatic tool?
8. Should there be a standardized procedure for all UN sanctions regimes regarding humanitarian exemptions, or should it be adapted on a case-by-case basis?

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## **Topic 2 : *Open Agenda***

Please stay up to date with current issues!